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ABSTRACT

The workers' movement has long recognized the importance of the press and other cultural institutions in developing and sustaining class consciousness and the movement itself. Hundreds of workers' newspapers were established throughout the United States by labor unions, working-class political organizations, and sympathetic editors. These papers, ranging from hand-written, locally-circulated sheets to national daily newspapers published in regional editions (many published in foreign languages), were later supplemented by news services, broadcasting and (more recently) public relations campaigns. While scattered studies of individual newspapers and foreign-language newspapers published by immigrant socialists exist, little research into the operation, content, and influence of labor publications has been conducted as yet. (Six tables of data and 82 references are appended.) (MM)

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WORKING-CLASS NEWSPAPERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

The workers' movement has long recognized the importance of the press and other cultural institutions in developing and sustaining class consciousness and the movement. Hundreds of workers' newspapers were established throughout the United States by labor unions, working-class political organizations and sympathetic editors. These papers, ranging from hand-written, locally-circulated sheets to national daily newspapers published in regional editions, were later supplemented by news services, broadcasting and (more recently) public relations campaigns. While there are scattered studies of individual newspapers and, recently, of foreign-language workers' newspapers published by immigrant socialists, there has been little research into the operation, content and influence of labor publications.

This paper briefly examines the development of the working-class press, the legal and economic constraints under which it operated, and its impact upon the labor movement; arguing for greater research in this neglected area.

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WORKING-CLASS NEWSPAPERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Working-class movements, in the United States and abroad, have traditionally placed great importance upon their press--both to reach out to and persuade a larger audience and to maintain contact with and sustain movement adherents. Yet as Saville (1977) has noted, study of the labor and socialist press has generally been neglected by historians, though the workers' press has been extensively used as source material for histories of working-class organizations and struggles (see, for example, Avrich, 1984; Conlin, 1981;] and Gutman, 1977). Journalism historians have similarly neglected working-class newspapers, focussing instead upon commercial newspapers (particularly English-language dailies) and their founders. This paper reviews the extant literature on working-class newspapers in the United States with special attention to the role of these publications in formulating movement ideology and tactics, promoting organization and solidarity, and sustaining and building the organizations and movements by and for whom they were published; and concludes by arguing for further research in this neglected area.

E.P. Thompson (1963) has written of the importance of the workers' press of the nineteenth century in developing and sustaining a burgeoning class consciousness, and of the fierce determination shown both in the government's efforts to silence the radical press and in the movement's determination to sustain their press even in the face of prison terms and insufficient

resources. Hopkin (1978:294) notes that socialists "have always believed in the power of the press to influence politics", with the British workers' movement issuing some 2,000 papers between 1800 and 1914:

> The possession of a paper was regarded as indispensable to a political party... An official organ provided a channel for communicating opinions and decisions regarding party policy, and it also coordinated and publicized the general activities of the party.... Indeed, the very existence of a party organ often stimulated such activities....
> (Hopkin, 1978:298)

Similarly, the workers' press was central to movement efforts to carry out radical education and to create and sustain a specifically working-class culture. Johnson (1979:80) argues that the working-class movement's cultural institutions--communal reading and discussion groups, the cultural politics of local movement centers, travelling lecturers, and "above all the radical press, the most successful radical invention and an extremely flexible (and therefore ubiquitous) educational form"--laid the basis for the emergence of the Chartist movement in England, and for other efforts to mobilize the working class.

In other countries the workers' press assumed similar importance. The German Social-Democratic Party executive proclaimed that "the first and most important means of agitation we possess is the press" (Hall, 1977:206), building a network of daily newspapers with a combined 1913 circulation of nearly one and a half million subscribers that blanketed the country. It is remarkable, Hall argues,

> how little serious attention has been paid to the importance of the SPD press during the Wilhelmine period... The SPD press played a primary role in building up a political organization to represent the working class. It was not in fact the party which initially provided a stable readership for the press, rather it was the necessary groundwork of political persuasion by party journalists that recruited the general party membership... (Hall, 1977:24-25)

SPD journalists doubled as organizers and agitators, and several served as candidates for and members of the Reichstag, Land Parliament, and local party executives. Socialist and labor movements throughout the world have consistently devoted substantial resources to building and sustaining an independent workers' press, often under extremely difficult circumstances.

ORIGINS OF THE U.S. WORKERS' PRESS

U.S. workers quickly came to realize the importance of establishing their own press and other cultural institutions. In 1797 William Manning proposed founding a workers' society, the most important function of which would be to publish a monthly magazine and a weekly newspaper (McFarland & Thistlethwaite, 1983). Though nothing came of Manning's plans, at least sixty-eight workers' newspapers, many of them dailies, were established between 1828 and 1834.

In October of 1828 the Philadelphis Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations launched the first labor paper of which copies survive, THE MECHANICS' FREE PRESS. The FREE PRESS, which appeared weekly until either 1831 (Myers, 1950) or 1835 (McFarland and Thistlethwaite, 1983), circulated some 1500 copies (not insignificant for the time) and played a major role in winning the 10-hour day, abolishing imprisonment for debt, and bolstering the labor movement's efforts to elect 'friends of labor' to political office before the movement collapsed (Myers, 1950). Among some 50 labor newspapers inspired by the FREE PRESS between 1829 and 1832 was the New York City-based WORKING MAN'S ADVOCATE, which was published under various names (usually as a weekly, but for two and a half months as a daily) until

1849 (McFarland & Thistlethwaite, 1983).

Whether published by or in behalf of unions or a labor party, this early press tended to concentrate--with varying degrees of militance--on political reforms. A major concern was winning the right to organize and strike (Myers, 1950; Schiller, 1981) in the face of prosecutions for "conspiracy to injure trade" and unlawful association.

The earliest daily workers' newspaper appears to have been the New York DAILY SENTINEL, published (with a brief stint as a semi-weekly) from February 15, 1830 until 1833 (Myers, 1950:59). Responding to the generally inhospitable climate for labor, other papers--both dailies and weeklies--were soon launched in order to "answer the charges of reactionaries" against the unions (Myers, 1950:71).

This early labor press, like its successors, has been little studied. Myers (1950) provides the most comprehensive account, but provides little more than a series of titles and dates (together with brief descriptions of the labor climate of the day and occassional excerpts to provide a sense of editorial perspective) for the hundreds of labor publications he mentions. While particular labor papers have been studied--see, for example, Beck (1970); Berner (1985); Halverson & Ames (1969); McEnroe (1960); McFarland & Thistlethwaite (1983); Richards (1984); Van Tine(1967); and Wagner & Buhle (1980)--these studies have tended to focus on the papers' editorial perspectives or on biographical sketches of their publishers. Comparative studies such as Schofield's (1980) study of early labor papers' stance on women's issues are rare. And the reasons why the workers' movement fought to establish and maintain these papers, their

impact, the nature and extent of their circulation, and similar questions have yet to be investigated.

There are few overviews of this press--none of which have been published. Myers' (1950) thesis covers the period from 1827 to 1867; Lutzky (1951) briefly discusses the early labor press in the context of a dissertation on the 1870-1900 reform press; while Sheppard (1949) provides a pioneering account of the Chicago labor press from 1850 to 1890, with special attention to anarchist and Knights of Labor newspapers including the Knights' brief foray into daily publishing. Nelson (1985) argues, however, that Sheppard's account is rife with error--a common problem in the extant literature.

Myers (1950) establishes that this early labor press depended upon the health of the labor movement it served for survival, virtually disappearing during periods when unions were under particularly severe attack. In the 1860s, however, the labor press, and the labor movement, became firmly enough established to survive economic downturns and repression. More than 120 daily, weekly and monthly labor papers were established between 1863 and 1873. While remaining interested in questions of political reform, these papers tended to focus more specifically on labor issues. Many of the daily papers established during this period began as strike papers, generally cooperatively published and often disappearing when the strike that called them into existence came to an end. Some of these papers were able to compete quite successfully for a time with extensive news reports and advertising. Yet they remained financially precarious, and most were able to last only a few years before collapsing. Without financial backing it was

> impossible for the labor papers to compete with the commercial press on an equal basis. Yet the influence of the labor journals was considerable.... The labor press helped convince the workers that... the only solution was unionization on a nation-wide basis... (Myers, 1950:158-59)

The 1880s saw explosive growth of the labor movement. In the Pacific Northwest the Knights of Labor was at the center of the movement, and was "responsible for launching most of Washington's early labor and reform journals" (Schwantes, 1980:112). In 1886, the Chicago Knights launched the weekly KNIGHTS (later RIGHTS) OF LABOR, which was published for seven years and was, for a time, "the most widely circulated journal of organized labor in Chicago" (Sheppard, 1979:35). The 1870s and 1880s saw the workers' movement launch foreign-language daily newspapers (some of which were to publish for decades) throughout the midwestern and eastern states.

The foreign-language press has been, until very recently, one of the most neglected sections of the workers' press. While foreign-language working-class newspapers have, on occassion, been discussed incidental to broader histories, especially of the Haymarket Tragedy (Avrich, 1984; Nelson, 1985), they received little attention in their own right prior to the work of the European-based Labor Newspapers Preservation Project (Hoerder 1987, 1984; Harzig and Hoerder, 1985). Yet the first workers' papers to be published in Chicago, for example, were published in German during the 1850s (Sheppard, 1949:12). Of fifteen daily workers' newspapers listed by the Rand School's Labor Research Department (1925) only six were published in the English language. Foreign-language papers continued to constitute a large share of U.S. workers' papers (particularly of dailies) throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

Yet Myers (1950) touches on the foreign-language labor press only briefly while Park (1922) treats it with ill-disguised hostility. The essays in Miller (1987) touch on working-class newspapers in the course of a broader treatment of ethnic papers, and Chyz (1959) provides a brief overview of foreign-language papers. Nelson (1985) and Sheppard (1949) discuss Chicago's foreign-language workers' press for the closing decades of the 19th century, while Hummasti (1977) offers an invaluable overview of the Finnish-language workers' press for the period 1900-1921. (Substantial research has been conducted on Finnish-language working-class newspapers. See, for example, Hummasti 1981, 1979; Kolehmainen, 1955; and Kostiainen, 1977.) But in view of the large proportion of immigrant workers in the labor movement and the clear relevance of the foreign-language workers' press to understanding these workers' consciousness and organization, this general neglect is somewhat surprising.

The Industrial Workers of the World, for example, published dozens of papers during this period, issued in several languages by industrial unions, the General Executive Board, local branches and, particularly for its foreign-language publications, co-operatives and individual editors. Conlin (1974:131) argues that "the Wobblies had a compulsion to publish newspapers (one partial bibliography lists 66 periodical publications by the IWW between 1905 and 1919) and a positive knack for the craft." Historians have drawn heavily upon this press--in particular the INDUSTRIAL WORKER and SOLIDARITY--for their studies of the IWW, but the few studies on the papers themselves remain largely unpublished. The IWW's foreign-language press has been (with the partial exception of its

Finnish-language press) ignored by historians, as have been the union's local and industrial union papers--the latter are excluded even from Miles' (1986) otherwise comprehensive bibliography.

The IWW's only publication to sustain daily publication (other than during the crisis of the Chicago sedition trial when a daily defense bulletin was issued), for instance, was the Finnish-language INDUSTRIALISTI. INDUSTRIALISTI was published as an IWW paper from 1916 until 1975 (though it was published weekly and fortnightly in its final decades), while other foreign-language IWW papers continued through the 1950s. The IWW also issued publications for mine, marine transport, textile, agricultural, lumber and metal workers on both a local and national basis. The LUMBER-WORKERS BULLETIN, at least, was still bring published in 1945, though bibliographic and holdings information on these publications is largely unavailable. Yet in large part it is these papers which could yield information about the union's cultural dimension, and its day-to-day activity in industry.

Van Tine (1967), in his account of the early years of SOLIDARITY, demonstrates that despite the paper's tenuous financial condition and small circulation SOLIDARITY and its editor played a major role in shaping the union's ideology, and in assisting IWW organizing efforts. McEnroe's (1960) study focuses on the better-circulated INDUSTRIAL WORKER from 1910 to 1924. The WORKER, McEnroe argues, played a vital role not only in reaching out to prospective supporters but also in keeping members--who often had no other regular means of contact with the organization aside from the job delegate--informed of

internal debates and discussions. The INDUSTRIAL WORKER was not only the IWW's main organ for disseminating and discussing its views, it played a major role in helping the IWW organize the timber industry and maintain contact with its highly transitory membership. The WORKER was important both for internal communications and for reaching a broader audience, making editorial policy and control matters of extreme importance (and, on occassion, controversy). The IWW shared McEnroe's view of the importance of its press. Writing in the INDUSTRIAL PIONEER, C.E. Payne (1926)--who edited several IWW publications and served a stint as IWW General Secretary-Treasurer--exhorted:

> Perhaps the most vital part of the Industrial Workers of the World is its press.... If we have no press we will soon have no organization.... The press and the organization are each vitally necessary to the other. We strengthen the organization when we build up the press. It is our chief point of contact with the unorganized, whom we must reach to succeed in our revolutionary task of overthrowing capitalism. As we push the press among the unorganized... they will give power to the organization until it shall be invincible.

THE DAILY WORKERS' PRESS

Of the dozens of socialist and labor daily newspapers launched in the United States over the years, I have been able to locate studies on only a few: the Seattle UNION RECORD, Seattle DAILY CALL, Milwaukee LEADER, the UNITYPO (ITU) papers, the Madison PRESS-CONNECTION, the Butte BULLETIN, and the five daily Finnish-language publications published by the Communist and Socialist parties and by the IWW. In addition, Chicago's ARBEITER-ZEITUNG and the Socialist Labor Party's DAILY PEOPLE have been studied as part of larger histories (Avrich, 1984, Ensslen & Ickstadt, 1983; Nelson, 1985; and Sheppard, 1949; Kraditor, 1981). The rest--most of which were issued in the

second half of the 19th century, several others in the first two decades of the twentieth, but some of which continue to this day--remain unexplored. Information on the number and nature of these working-class newspapers is hard to come by, but the Labor Press Directory (Labor Research Dept.-Rand, 1925) lists 15 daily papers being published at that time (two by the Communist Party, one by the IWW, six by the Socialist Party, and six either independently or by central labor bodies--three of the six papers published in English were in the latter category). The American Labor Press Directory (Levine, 1940?) published fifteen years later lists only two dailies, but excludes foreign-language newspapers. At present there are at least two workers' dailies in the U.S.--the Communist Party's PEOPLE'S DAILY WORLD and the Wilkes-Barre CITIZENS VOICE, a strike paper published by The Newspaper Guild which has since become that city's dominant newspaper (Wagner and Buhle, 1980).

All of the working-class dailes which have been studied had precarious existences, rarely able to pay their own way and handicapped by the growing reliance of the newspaper on advertising revenues (which they found largely unavailable) and the large circulations this necessitated.

The Milwaukee LEADER--longest-lived of these papers--was born in December of 1911 as the English-language publication of Milwaukee's Socialist Party. (The party also published German and Polish-language weeklies, and campaign broadsides in other languages [Miller, 1975].) The LEADER doubled as the official organ of the Federated Trades Council (AFL), and played a crucial role in enabling the Party to win support outside of its traditional German ethnic base. Two months after sweeping into

(local) power, it decided to publish a daily newspaper, raising some $80,000 in starting capital. With US entry into World War I, the LEADER was barred from the mails, advertising was withdrawn (often under government pressure), and mail delivery to LEADER offices terminated. But the LEADER continued, under different ownerships after 1938 (the Trades Council, local businessmen, and finally a workers' cooperative), maintaining a circulation of 30-46,000 copies for most of its life before expiring in 1942.

Ongoing research into the LEADER points to the paper's vital role in promoting and sustaining not only the Socialist Party, but also the Milwaukee Trades Council. LEADER pages gave prominent play to workers' grievances, and to the activities of Milwaukee's vigorous labor movement. As could be expected, the LEADER devoted extensive space to the Socialist Party's program and campaigns--particularly for municipal office, where the Party was often successful--as well as to exposes of opposing politicians. Yet, the LEADER strove to be a complete newspaper with local, national and world news (heavily spiced with human-interest stories) along with Business, Sports and Women's pages. These efforts were hampered by insufficient resources, aggravated by the LEADER's difficulties in securing advertising despite its substantial circulation, and by the difficulty (especially prior to the establishment of Federated Press) of obtaining accurate and timely reports for labor and socialist news. The LEADER, especially during its early years, was forced to rely on United Press dispatches for the bulk of its news--dispatches which were often quite hostile to labor (and, especially towards more militant sectors of the labor movement)

and sometimes seem quite out of place on the LEADER's pages. Thus it was not atypical during the paper's first year for a LEADER headline to inform readers that "tin soldiers" had fired on women and children over a UP dispatch about how a mob of strikers had attacked state militia (Bekken, 1988).

Despite such difficulties, the Socialist Party and the Trades Council struggled for decades to keep the LEADER afloat despite continuing losses because it played a vital role. As Beck (1970:39) explains, the party relied on education to attain its goals. "And no weapon in the educational arsenal was as important as the Socialist press... The Leader completed a socialist trinity of party, labor and press."

Perhaps more typical of such papers was the Seattle DAILY CALL, launched in 1917 by a socialist insurance salesman on $500 capital. The Socialist Party quickly adopted the paper as its own, and circulation climbed to 15,000 copies (O'Connor, 1964). The CALL was always published on a shoe string, with the printer paid daily from the previous day's receipts: "When [the publisher] was behind on the printer's bill he would appeal to Sam Sadler, who had a way with the dice in crap games. After a few hours Sadler would return with enough to wipe out the day's deficit" (O'Connor, 1964:93). The CALL was frequently the target of police attention, and its printing plant was attacked and vandalized by a mob of sailors on January 5, 1918. Yet the paper continued publication for four more months before suspending operations in favor of the new daily UNION RECORD.

The UNION RECORD was published by the Seattle Central Labor Council (AFL), which had previously published a weekly paper. Launched with $20,000 (the bulk of which was contributed by

Boilermakers Local 104 which purchased advance subscriptions for its 5,000 members), the RECORD printed 12 to 24 pages daily and quickly reached a circulation of 50,000 copies. But the entire $20,000 went to purchase a press and rent a building, leaving the paper without working capital. "Many unions subscribed to RECORD stock and enabled it to continue, but the big department stores confined themselves to bargain basement advertising while the usual institutional advertising was absent..." (O'Connor, 1964:114). The RECORD played a major role in building the February 4, 1919 General Strike, but five years later the Labor Council had come under conservative leadership which saw little need for a daily labor newspaper and sold it.

Another labor daily, the Butte BULLETIN, was launched in late 1917, following a bitter miners' strike in which the local press had been vociferous in its support for the employers. During its six-year history, the BULLETIN "participated directly in the burning political and social issues of the time; its editors had looked upon this newspaper as not just a cold vehicle of 'facts' and objective analysis, but as a participant in social struggle" (Halverson & Ames, 1969:260). The paper helped elect a slate of local candidates, fought corruption in the local police department, fought the economic and political dominance of the region's only major employer, Anaconda Copper, and supported reform ideas that were sweeping Montana between 1917 and 1924. In January, 1924, the paper died--victim of a campaign of intimidation waged against its advertisers and of the reform movement's defeat. Like most papers of its type, the BULLETIN remains largely unknown. While discussing only briefly its actual publication, Halverson and Ames give

important information on how the funds to launch the BULLETIN were raised and the situation which impelled Butte's militant labor movement to take on publishing its own paper.

Of a sharply different character were the fifteen or so strike dailies established by the Typographical Union, either directly or through its Unitypo subsidiary. The strike paper has played a major role both in sustaining newspaper strikes, and as the impetus to the founding of workers' newspapers intended to accomplish a purpose broader than merely bringing a recalcitrant employer to terms. The ITU turned to its Unitypo venture (discussed in Berner, 1985) as part of its efforts to bring pressure to bear in a series of strikes (against employers seeking to force the union to comply with Taft-Hartley's anti-labor provisions and surrender control over work rules) being undermined by other printing unions. By drawing advertisers and readers away from struck newspapers, the ITU hoped to defend its union shop and conditions.

Although these papers did take a generally pro-labor stance, this was not their reason for existance. In August of 1951 Unitypo launched a chain of tabloids (each named DAILY NEWS-DIGEST) in small communities where ITU locals were on strike or locked-out, announcing that the papers were a response to the "danger in the number of monopoly newspaper enterprises in this country and the rate at which that list was increasing through mergers, suspensions, purchases, and consolidations" (cited in Berner, 1985:150). The 8-paper DIGEST chain was the only Unitypo venture to attempt a specifically labor slant on the news. Like other workers' papers, it was unprofitable from the start--largely, Berner argues, because of the decision to

target small towns unable to support a second paper.

Berner (1985) persuasively argues that the Unitypo papers were crippled by their inability to involve other unions in the project, and by insufficient attention to editorial content. The last Unitypo newspapers died in 1963 (or were sold to commercial interests), although publication of strike newspapers continues to this day.

More successful, at least on a journalistic level, was the Madison PRESS CONNECTION, launched as a strike newspaper in 1977 and published on a cooperative, worker-run basis until financial difficulties forced it out of business in January of 1980. Its peak circulation of 13,600 represented little threat to the entrenched Madison Newspapers, Incorporated dailies (the CAPITAL TIMES and WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL), however, and the PRESS CONNECTION was never able to draw the advertising needed to pay its way. Wagner & Buhle (1980) concentrate on the PRESS CONNECTION's internal structures, and its efforts to forge a broad-based progressive coalition of labor activists, feminists, small businesspeople, the poor, students and blacks.

WEEKLIES AND MONTHLIES

The hundreds of labor and socialist papers issued weekly and less frequently have received even less attention. The 1925 Labor Press Directory lists 311 labor and labor-related papers (excluding cooperative, religious and government publications aimed at workers or concerned with labor relations, which are also listed). Eighty-eight of these were published by the AFL and its affiliated internationals, another 99 'general labor' papers were issued mostly by affiliated locals or central labor

councils (though some papers in this category were independent). The 1940 American Labor Press Directory (which excludes papers not published in the English language) listed 628 U.S. labor newspapers, including 327 published by AFL-affiliated bodies and 110 by CIO affiliates. Circulation data for 289 of these papers (which the compilers warn are not entirely reliable) indicate a circulation of more than six and a half million copies.

Thistlethwaite (1951) reports that more than 400 U.S. labor newspapers were sent to the Department of Labor, with a combined circulation of more than 15 million copies. In 1948, he contends, the labor press reached more homes than the combined circulation of LIFE, TIME, READER'S DIGEST, SATURDAY EVENING POST, and COLLIERS. Garver (1957) cites the International Labor Press Association president's estimate of a combined labor press circulation in excess of 20 million copies for 1956, and a U.S. Labor Department listing of more than 800 labor papers. The number and frequency of labor publications has declined in the past two decades, but remains substantial.

While this press has gone virtually unstudied in terms of its structure, circulation and impact, there have been a handful of studies of content (primarily of national organs). Garver (1957) carried out content analysis on 34 labor papers issued in 1956, while Thistlethwaite (1951) surveyed labor editors to determine the policies and needs of labor editors and their opinions on current topics of interest to the labor movement. Notably, these editors held that the labor movement should establish a national labor daily. Thistlethwaite also examined the labor press's sources of revenue, finding that most papers were funded out of members' dues although a substantial number

(primarily local papers) accepted advertising as well.

In other studies, Perline (1969) compared content (by category) of 11 publications of large AFL-CIO unions for 1938-39 and 1960-61, finding that these publications paid relatively little attention to international labor news or to general labor news, while devoting substantial space to news of the union and industry, educational articles (the economy, labor history, upcoming meetings, contract provisions, etc.) and political news. Witt (1978) reports on the United Mine Workers' efforts to make its magazine more responsive to the membership (noting a tendency for labor publications to uncritically support the current leadership) after a reform administration took office in 1972. These measures included the inauguration of a Letters column, stories on the activities of members, detailed coverage of contract issues, and investigations of employers and government agencies whose actions affect the union's members. Such measures may seem unexceptional, but as Thomas (1928) points out, union papers have often been reduced to mere mouthpieces for incumbent administrations.

THE FEDERATED PRESS

Central to maintaining a workers' press, of course, is the problem of obtaining news from labor's perspective. As Hedges (1951) argues, "The growth of the labor press has been stimulated by the urgent need to counter the controlled opinion of the daily press and its vested interests" (pg. 177). To counter this prevailing anti-labor bias and to secure access to generally unreported news of interest to the workers' press, thirty-two editors met in Chicago in November, 1919 to build a

cooperative news-gathering service. With the support of labor, socialist, farm-labor and other papers, the Federated Press established three bureaus in Washington, Chicago and New York which dispatched daily releases beginning in 1920. Long (1920) reports that Federated Press began with more than 100 affiliated U.S. papers, as well as affiliates in other countries such as the British DAILY HERALD and papers in Germany, Russia, Australia and Scandanavia--enabling the service to provide foreign news at modest cost.

By 1925, the Rand Research Department's Labor Press Directory reported that the Federated Press circulated its daily 5,000 word service to 150 papers, and a supplemental weekly labor letter to 1,000 subscribers. Rosewater (1930) reported that 60 papers constituted the Federated Press, including twelve (mostly foreign-language) dailies. Assisted by a subsidy from the American Fund for Public Service, Federated Press was then operating on an annual budget of $25,000. A monthly service of longer feature articles had been added, and Federated Press was providing in-depth articles on "industrial and financial trends, ...corporation exhibits, government reports, wage findings of Federal authorities, and similar data" (Rosewater, 1930:367). Federated Press survived into the early 1950s, when it was one of four news services available to working-class newspapers (the others being tied to the AFL or CIO).

THE SOCIALIST PRESS

Weinstein (1967) notes that the Socialist press was the party's main vehicle for propaganda and education, reaching its high point in 1912-13 when the Party claimed some 323 English

and foreign-language daily, weekly and monthly publications. Total circulation exceeded two million copies at this time, with the APPEAL TO REASON--far and away the circulation leader--holding an average weekly circulation of 761,747. (These figures include a number of labor papers, such as the MINER'S MAGAZINE, journal of the Western Federation of Miners.) These papers combined Socialist muckraking, popular exposition of Marxist theories, and news of the Socialist, labor and farmer's movements in an effort to "reach and convert the masses, to bring the message of socialism to the greatest number of people" (Weinstein, 1967:85). Unlike the prevailing practice in England and Germany--or for papers associated with other U.S. workers' organizations such as the Socialist Labor or Workers' parties--these papers were predominantly owned by individuals or cooperatives. Until 1914 the Party had no official national newspaper, and the leading papers were all privately owned. As a consequence, SP papers did not always reflect the Party's positions even on major issues.

Most successful of all these papers--and one of the few to pay its own way--was the APPEAL TO REASON. The APPEAL came to dominate the socialist publishing field (Shore, 1985), having an enormous impact in building and shaping the Socialist Party in the Southwest (Green, 1978). For more than twenty-five years, the APPEAL was the U.S. socialist movement's central weekly. It began publication supporting the Populist Party but rapidly moved to support first the Socialist Labor Party and then the Socialist Party--for whom the APPEAL published 927,000 copies of an election special in 1900 (Quint, 1949). Key to the APPEAL's success was the Appeal Army, which sold subscriptions and

organized club subscriptions (where several copies would be shipped to a common address, at a lower rate, for distribution) (Shore, 1985; Green, 1975), and formed the basis for Socialist Party organizations in rural areas (Green, 1978). The APPEAL and its kindred publications, Shore contends, "performed a vital function for the young socialist movement--they were its major means of communication." (pg. 161)

The success of the APPEAL notwithstanding, the Socialist press tended to be highly unstable, primarily because of their precarious financial position. The outbreak of World War I, and the accompanying hysteria and government repression, crippled the Party's press:

> Within five months after war had been declared, every leading Socialist publication had been suspended from the mails at least once, and many were barred for weeks at a time... In addition to pressure applied by the federal government, Socialist papers in dozens of small towns and cities faced the wrath of vigilance committees organized by local chambers of commerce and boards of trade...
> (Weinstein, 1967:90-91)

Most Socialist papers were forced out of business, and only a few were replaced at war's end. By mid-1918, the Socialist press was largely confined to the larger cities--the once-burgeoning Socialist press in the West and Midwest had been decimated (though a few papers such as the Oklahoma LEADER lingered on into the 1940s).

Little attention has been paid to the press of other socialist organizations, aside from the short (and generally uninformative) essays in Conlin (1974) and various references to the Socialist Labor and Communist press in the course of more general histories of these parties.

The anarchist press has been even more neglected--only the Chicago anarchist press of the 1880s has been the object of any

in-depth study, although Trautmann (1980) does touch on Most's FREIHEIT (based for many years in New York), Buchstein (1975) attempts an overview of the anarchist press, and ten articles in Conlin (1974) briefly discuss selected papers. But, like the majority of the articles in Conlin's collection, these offer overviews of the papers and their editor(s) but provide little information on circulation, structure, or impact.

In Chicago the anarchist movement published eight newspapers in four languages in the 1880s, including a German-language daily and five weeklies (in Bohemian, English, German, and Scandanavian) (Avrich, 1984). The combined circulation of the three major German-language papers increased from 13,000 in 1880 (when they were still affiliated to the Socialist Labor Party) to 25,980 in 1886. Nelson (1985) estimates a circulation of approximately 30,880 copies for the 8 Chicago anarchist papers, noting that "the decision to subscribe to an anarchist paper was an active and conscious one..." representing a substantial level of commitment to the cause (pg. 177).

The three principal German-language papers were published by the Socialistic Publishing Company (a cooperative stock organization which also issued radical pamphlets) from 1878 until 1892, when it was reorganized as the Arbeiter-Zeitung Publishing Company. The other Chicago anarchist papers of the day were issued by the respective language sections of the International Working People's Association. The ARBEITER-ZEITUNG sustained daily publication from 1878 until 1920, although with reduced influence--and as a Socialist Party organ after 1910. The English-language ALARM, however, survived the execution of its editor, Albert Parsons, by only

two years. Yet before the movement was broken by repression Chicago's anarchist press was a dynamic, growing part of a working-class counterculture--helping to spread anarchist ideas, promote movement events, and maintain contact with tens of thousands of supporters (Nelson, 1985).

STUDYING THE WORKERS' PRESS

While the workers' press has been used extensively by historians of political and social movements as a source of information about those movements, the study of the press as a subject in itself has barely begun. Garver (1957) has noted "a dearth of solid research work into the operation, content and influence of labor publications"--the situation is only slightly better today. In the past two decades much of the groundwork for such studies has been laid with the reissuance of scores of publications in facsimile or microfilm and the compilation of bibliographic information (most notably by Goldwater (1964), Hoerder (1987), Labor Research Dept. (1925), and State Historical Society (1960) which has microfilmed some 500 labor papers including 175 local union publications). Yet, as Reynolds (1985:43) cautions:

> Although we know the apparent homogeneity of a set of bound volumes or a microfilm to be deceptive, it is not easy to bear in mind the conditions in which the original issues were produced. And a newspaper is a source of information about anything but itself. To discover the material conditions of production of a paper, its ownership and control, the conflict or consensus behind it, one has to turn elsewhere: the external evidence is usually fragmentary, often biased, and hard to come by...

Such evidence does exist, however, for several papers--particularly those published by established organizations or co-operatives. The Tamiment Library, for example, contains an

early survey of Socialist Party papers, the papers of editors of various union and political papers, minutes of the Workingmen's Cooperative Publishing Association (which published the New York DAILY CALL), and minutes of the board overseeing New York's socialist German-language daily (Swanson, 1977). Post office records, where (and if) these survive, could prove an important source of information on circulation of those papers which relied on the mails for delivery (as did most non-dailies), while some papers published lists of subscribers or donors. In addition, police and government records, while biased and often inaccessible, represent probably the largest extant body of records of the activities and influence of the more militant segments of the workers' movement and its press. Yet such sources have been only infrequently used--and all too many 'scholars' have not even troubled to glance at the papers which are the subject of their studies (a particularly galling example is Kessler [1984], who does not even correctly render the names of the papers and organizations being studied; many of the essays in Conlin [1974] are almost as flawed). While there have been significant advances in the study of the workers' press--particularly of foreign-language papers--in recent years, much more remains to be done. Areas that suffer from particularly severe neglect are the english- and foreign-language union press and local labor and socialist papers.

Similarly neglected are efforts by the workers' movement to make use of other communications media such as radio and television. In the course of Douglas's (1986) study on labor public relations efforts, she discusses union efforts to utilize radio and television both to reach labor audiences and to reach

the general public through union-owned radio stations and union-sponsored broadcasts heard on hundreds of stations. Russell (1937) and Cedervall (1960?) report on IWW radio programs in Tacoma and Cleveland broadcast during the 1930s. More recently, the workers movement has organized local broadcasts on community and other radio stations and on cable television, including anarchist, IWW, socialist and union shows in many parts of the country (Action for Labor Access, 1986; Hulser, 1985).

WHY STUDY THE WORKERS' PRESS?

Jones (1983:94) argues that the study of working-class movements, if we hope to understand its aspirations and consciousness, "must start from what [they] actually said or wrote, the terms in which they addressed each other or their opponents." The study of the language of a movement, then, offers a starting point to understanding both its ideology and its form and activities. As Shore (1985) has noted, the workers' press was as important as party organization(s) in developing the U.S. socialist movement, a conclusion fully borne out by Green's (1978) study of grass-roots socialism in the Southwest.

The history of the workers' press is a history of adversity--of financial crisis, government repression and harassment, of a small group of dedicated activists struggling to put forth their message in the face of overwhelming odds. Advertising, access to the mails and printing presses, and even newsprint supplies could be cut off and often were (e.g., Beck, 1970; Fowler, 1977). While some papers attained (generally short-lived) financial success, most relied on the strength of their organization--or the movement in general--for sustenance.

While socialist movements often strained their resources to the limit to keep their publications afloat, the labor movement, as Thomas (1921) argues, has generally been reluctant to devote the necessary resources, except for brief periods of time.

Despite these major obstacles, the working-class press has played a major role over the years in sustaining movement organizations and in reaching out to the masses of uncommitted workers. It is the workers' press in which the movement has developed its ideas and chronicled its struggles. And working-class newspapers have played a key part in the movement's efforts to develop class consciousness and to organize and mobilize workers to bring about a new and better world.

SELECTED TABLES

U.S. SOCIALIST PARTY PERIODICALS*

1912: 323 Socialist periodicals,
262 English-language, most weekly
9 daily newspapers, various languages

1918: 123 Socialist periodicals
10 daily newspapers, various languages

*excludes several newspapers for 1918 where continued publication was unclear.

Information from James Weinstein (1967): THE DECLINE OF SOCIALISM IN AMERICA. New York: Vintage.

NUMBER OF U.S. RADICAL PUBLICATIONS, 1920*

Language:

Armenian	1	Italian	27
Bohemian	9	Jewish	20
Bulgarian	3	Lettish	11
Croation	4	Lithuanian	15
Danish	4	Polish	7
Esthonian	1	Portugese	1
Finnish	11	Rumanian	16
French	1	Slovenian	8
German	21	Spanish	8
Greek	2	Swedish	6
Hungarian	23	Ukrainian	8
		Yiddish	15

Total Foreign-language	222
English-language papers	105
TOTAL	327

*as reported by Department of Justice.

taken from Robert E. Park: THE IMMIGRANT PRESS AND ITS CONTROL, page 436. Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1922; Reprinted 1970, Greenwood Press.

DAILY WORKERS' PAPERS, 1925

Published by:

Socialist Party	6
Communist Party	2
Industrial Workers of the World	1
Independent	3
AFL Central Labor Councils	3
TOTAL	15

English-language Only:

Socialist Party	2
Communist Party	1
Central Labor Councils	3

LABOR AND LABOR-RELATED PAPERS, 1925

Published by:

AFL and affiliated intls	88
"General Labor", most AFL	99
Independent Unions	20
Industrial Workers of the World	14
Trade Union Education League	7
Socialist Party	30
Communist Party	28
Socialist Labor Party	6
Farmer-Labor Party	19
TOTAL	311

taken from LABOR PRESS DIRECTORY, Labor Research Dept., Rand School for Social Science, New York, 1925.

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WORKERS' NEWSPAPERS, 1940

Published by:

AFL and affiliated bodies	327
CIO and affiliated bodies	110
Farmer-Labor Party	13
Communist Party	8
Industrial Workers of the World	3
Socialist Party	3
Others	212
TOTAL (includes 3 daily papers)	646

taken from David Levine: THE AMERICAN LABOR PRESS: AN ANNOTATED DIRECTORY, American Council on Public Affairs, Washington D.C., no date.

NEWSPAPERS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

	English	Foreign
1905-15	12	7
1916-25	18	19
1926-35	14	4
1936-45	5	2
1946-55	2	2
1956-65	5	1
1966-75	4	1
1976-85	3	0

Excludes several Industrial Union and local publications, most published between 1916 and 1940 (no known listing), and 16 foreign-language papers for which dates of publication are unknown. Includes only U.S. newspapers, as listed in Dione Miles: SOMETHING IN COMMON: AN IWW BIBLIOGRAPHY, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, supplemented by author's research.

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